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A True Historie & Account of the PYRATE Captain Misson, his crew & their Colony of Libertatia founded on Peoples Rights & Liberty on the Island of Madagascar.

The story of Misson and Libertatia

retold by
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REASONS

For Reducing the

Pyrates at Madagafcar:

AND

PROPOSALS *humbly offered to the Honourable Houfe of Commons, for effecting the fame.*

THAT certain Pyrates having fome Years fince found the Ifland of *Madagafcar* to be the moft Proper, if not the only Place in the World for their Abode, and carrying on their Deftructive Trade with Security, betook themfelves thither ; and being fince increafed to a formidable Body are becoming a manifeft Obftruction to Trade, and Scandal to our Nation and Religion, being moft of them *Englifh*, at leaft four Fifths.

That *Madagafcar* is one of the Largeft Iflands in the World, and very Fruitful, lies near the Entrance into the *Eaft-Indies*, and is divided into a great many petty Kingdoms independant of each other, fo that there is no making Application to any Supream Monarch

(or indeed any elfe) to Expel or Deftroy the Pyrates there.

That upon a general Peace, when Multitudes of Soldiers and Seamen will want Employment ; or by length of Time, and the Pyrates generating with the Women of the Country, their Numbers fhould be increafed, they may form themfelves into a Settlement of Robbers, as Prejudicial to Trade as any on the Coaft of *Affrica*.

For it's natural to confider, That all Perfons owe by Inftinct a Love to the Place of their Birth : Therefore the prefent Pyrates muft defire to return to their Native Country ; and if this prefent Generation fhould be once Extinct, their Children will have the fame Inclination to *Madagafcar* as thefe have to *England*, and will not have any fuch Affection for *England*, altho' they will retain the Name of *English* ; and confequently all thofe fucceeding Depredations committed by them will be charged to the Account of *England*. Notwithftanding they were not born with us, fo that this feems the only Time for Reducing them to their Obedience, and preventing all thofe evil Confequences.

It muft therefore be allow'd to be a very defirable and neceffary Thing, that they fhould be fuppreffed in Time ; and that if it ever be effected, it muft be either by Force or by Perfwafion.

Commons proposal, 1704

Origins

This story of Misson, his pirate crew and their free colony of Libertatia is not offered as a model for a Utopia nor as an indication of how a libertarian society might be constructed today. Rather it is an account of an early attempt by a group of people to build a genuinely libertarian and egalitarian community. A community which attempted to live by the maxim "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" nearly one hundred years before the French Revolution.

Captain Misson spent most of his adult life as a pirate. However, his ship, which flew a flag with the emblazonment 'Liberty', was not unique in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Most of the pirate ships of that time were floating republics. On board these vessels decisions were made by the assembled ship's company or by an elected delegate committee. Some pirate ships in the Caribbean even drew up detailed constitutions. Unlike the autocratic pirate captains of story books the real pirate captains only had the right of command during the actual engagement of other ships. At other times the quartermaster took the role of community leader and acted as arbiter should quarrels arise.

The loot from captured ships was shared almost equally. The captain usually got a double share for physically leading the attack and sometimes a one and a half, or one and a quarter share went to the quartermaster, gunner or ship's carpenter. Fixed amounts were also paid for injuries suffered in battle.

The real autocratic and merciless sea captains were to be found on the merchant ships and men-of-war of the time. Conditions for ordinary seamen were both harsh and dangerous — and the pay was poor. Punishments available to the ships' officers included manacling, flogging and keel-hauling — a punishment which involved the victim being pulled, by means of a rope, under the hull of the ship from one side to the other. Keel-hauling was a punishment which often proved fatal.

The pirates' lack of this type of oppressive leadership and harsh punishment is often given as the reason for their downfall. This is a strange assertion as few pirates ever met their downfall. On the West Indies routes the chance of capture was less than one in a hundred — on the East Indies route it was virtually non- existent.

The only source for the complete story of Misson and his crew is *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates** by Captain

*Quotes in the text are all taken from this book.

Charles Johnson. The Misson story appears in the enlarged second edition published in 1726. Unfortunately this is the only source of information about Misson. There exists other documentary evidence for the exploits of the other pirates in the *General History* but none for Misson.

Because of this lack of corroborating evidence some writers have dismissed the account as fable — others suspect that 'Charles Johnson' was a pseudonym of Daniel Defoe. However, we need to ask why, in such a comprehensive and authoritative catalogue as the *General History*, Johnson should have chosen to include just one fictitious character. It should also be remembered that Johnson was writing very recent history and in some cases about living people whose exploits, or reported exploits, would have been known to his readers.

There are a few passing references to Misson, particularly in relation to his friendship with the North American pirate, Captain Tew, but these all postdate Johnson's *General History*.

Johnson may even have used the real or imaginary Misson as a vehicle for his own radical views. A speech denouncing those who profit from slavery would certainly have been safer reported from the lips of a pirate than written in the first person — particularly at a time when the Royal Family had a large financial interest in the slave trade. Johnson himself claimed that the bulk of the Misson story came from a manuscript written by Misson himself

and passed to Johnson by a French contact — but one could still say that, were that true, Johnson would not have been the first, nor the last, historian to be taken in by a fake document.

But reading the *General History*, Johnson appears to be no fool. Another pirate of popular legend at the time was Avery, who was reputed to have ruled as king an island paradise complete with boundless treasure and dusky maidens in attendance. Johnson tracked him down and found him to be a vain and penniless drunkard.

In much the same way as that other folk hero, Robin Hood, Misson has been credited with, in addition to his own exploits, the exploits of others and incidents both exaggerated and imagined. As with Robin Hood there is more than a trace of wishful thinking in the story of Misson. But the wish was there and if nothing else the story of Misson stands as a tribute, over 250 years' old, to the concept of a society run on a system of co-operation and mutual aid, which cared for its old and disabled, was merciful to its malefactors, ran its own affairs and needed neither money nor policemen.

Misson

Misson — a *nom de guerre*, his real name is not revealed — was born in Provence of a large and long established family. He

was educated in humanities, logic and mathematics and sent for a year to the Academy at Angers. Upon his return, the 16-year old Misson was to be sent to join the Musketeers. But the young Misson was an avid reader of travellers' tales and wanted to travel himself. A relative, a Monsieur Fourbin, was in command of a French warship, the *Victoire*. Misson was signed on as a volunteer and dispatched to Marseilles to join his ship.

The *Victoire* set sail almost at once to cruise the Mediterranean and Misson set about his work with enthusiasm. In his free time he paid the bo'sun and ship's carpenter to teach him the skills of ship construction and maintenance.

When the *Victoire* docked at Naples, Misson obtained leave to visit Rome — a particular desire of his. He was outraged at the decadence of the Papal Court and came to the conclusion that "all religion was no more than a curb upon the minds of the weaker."

He confessed his doubts to a young Dominican priest who surprised Misson by admitting to the same opinion. In strong terms the priest denounced the self-interest and corruption of the clergy and added, "For my part, I am quite tired of the farce, and will lay hold of the first opportunity to throw off this masquerading habit".

Misson supplied this opportunity and bought the priest a suit of clothes and took him as a volunteer on board the *Victoire*. The priest was Signor Carac-

cioli and the two were to become lifelong companions.

They rejoined the ship at Leghorn and two days out of port they were attacked by two Sallee pirates. The *Victoire* sank one pirate and boarded the other. Misson and Caraccioli were part of the first wave of attack — Caraccioli needing surgery after being shot in the thigh.

The *Victoire* returned to Marseilles and after a month was sent to Rochelle to escort merchant ships to the West Indies. The merchant ships were far from ready and Misson and Caraccioli signed on for a short cruise in the English Channel aboard the privateer *Triumph*. Preying upon English merchantmen they finally towed back a prize which they sold in Brest.

The two returned to the *Victoire* and one month later set sail for Martinique and Guadalupe. The long voyage gave much time for discussion. Having dispatched the Christian church, Caraccioli turned his attention to the absurdities of the Jewish and Moslem religions. The other crew members started to join in the discussions and soon Caraccioli had a number of proselytes who saw him as a new prophet who had risen to reform the abuses of religion. But Caraccioli was just warming up. "When he had experienced the effects of his religious arguments, he fell upon government, and showed them that every man was born free, and had as much right to what would support him as to the air he respired... that

the vast difference between man and man, the one wallowing in luxury, the other in the most pinching necessity, was owing only to avarice and ambition on the one hand and a pusillanimous subjection on the other."

He denounced the death penalty for any crime and renounced the right to kill except "in defence of our material right, which is such a share of earth as is necessary for our support". Caraccioli spoke to Misson of "setting up for themselves" — an idea which appealed to many of the crew.

On a cruise out of Martinique the *Victoire* met with a 40-gun English man-o'-war, the *Winchelsea*. The ships engaged and the first broadside from the English ship killed the captain, second captain and the three lieutenants on board the *Victoire*. This left only the master who was for surrendering, but Misson and Caraccioli rallied the crew and fought on for three hours.

By some accident the *Winchelsea* suddenly blew up and sank. The French put down boats but found only one survivor, a Lieutenant Franklin, who died two days later. The crew of the *Victoire* suddenly found themselves in control of their own ship. They hardly needed Caraccioli to evoke the beginnings of Mohamet and Darius to see the potential of the situation in which they found themselves.

Misson announced his resolve to lead a life of liberty and the crew called upon him to be their captain. He accepted their offer on condition that all

those averse to following his fortune would be put ashore near to civilisation. No one took up his offer.

They then elected a ship's council — Caraccioli as lieutenant, the schoolmaster as second lieutenant and Jean Besace as third. Matthieu le Tondu and the gunner they elected as their representatives in council. The new council met at once in the great cabin — to decide which course to steer. They agreed that the Spanish coast was likely to be the most profitable choice.

Matthieu le Tondu asked what colours they would fly and suggested a black flag as the most terrifying; but Caraccioli objected. They were not pirates he insisted, but vigilant guardians of the peoples' rights and liberties. He advised a white flag with 'Liberty' painted on the fly.

The canvas bulkhead of the great cabin had been rolled up for the crew to hear their council in session and at this point the assembled crew took up the cry "Liberty!".

The property of the dead officers was brought up on deck. Those in need of clothes were given new ones and the money was placed in a common chest which was securely padlocked — each member of the council having a key. Misson brought out the plate from the great cabin and put it in the common coffer, but the crew requested that he should keep it out for his own use.

He addressed the ship's company and called for the rule of brotherly love, "the banishment of all

private piques and grudges. That in throwing off the yoke of tyranny... he hoped none would follow the example of the tyrants, and turn his back on justice; for when equity was trodden underfoot, misery, confusion and mutual distrust naturally followed".

Misson warned the crew that they would find few friends in the world. The majority of mankind lived in slavery "by which their spirits were broke" making them incapable of generous thought. Such men "dance to the music of their chains and would brand this generous crew with the invidious name of pirates, and think it meritorious to be instrumental in their destruction".

The crew of the *Victoire* numbered 200 able hands and 35 sick or wounded. Off St Christopher's they took an English sloop, relieved her of two puncheons of rum and six hogsheads of sugar, and sent her on her way. The master of the sloop, Thomas Butler, "owned he never met with so candid an enemy".

After some minor adventures — including an attempt by a privateer to take the *Victoire* — the crew took a Dutch prize. With Misson and Caraccioli masquerading as Fourbin and his first lieutenant they sold their prize and put ashore their prisoners at Carthegena. Don Juan de la Zerda, the Governor, was so taken in by Misson and Caraccioli that, their business concluded, he asked if they would do him a small favour. He wanted them to meet with and escort the *St Joseph*, a galleon of 70 guns then lying

in Porto Bello. The Governor was concerned for her cargo of 800,000 pieces of eight and a substantial amount of gold bullion.

The *Victoire* left to 'escort' the *St Joseph* but found that she had left two days earlier. The hull of the *Victoire* had grown foul; she was slowing down and becoming hard to steer. The warm waters of the Caribbean encourage the growth of weeds on the bottom of ships, and the sea is also infested with Teredo, a shellfish which attaches itself to the hull and eats the wood away. Ships had to be careened three to six times a year. This involved dry-docking the ship, scraping the hull and replacing rotted timbers. The best ships had their hull sheathed with lead or copper, but the pirates had to make do with a sealing coat of a tar, tallow and sulphur mixture.

Not having dry-dock facilities the pirates careened their ships by beaching them and, by use of tackle attached to nearby trees, pulling them first on to one side and then the other. Sometimes they could only manage a partial careening while on the run.

There was little chance of the *Victoire* overtaking the *St Joseph* so they pulled into a landlocked bay and, by moving the guns to one side of the ship and then to the other they scraped and tallowed as far down as they could; but they could not properly careen her keel.

With the ship righted again the ship's council split on which course to steer. Misson and Caraccioli were for moving to the African coast, while the

others were for going to New England declaring that the *Victoire* had a rotten keel and was unfit for a transatlantic voyage.

They called a general meeting of the entire ship's company and the vote was for Africa. After an uneventful crossing they arrived off the Gold Coast and fell upon the *Nieuwstadt*, a Dutch slaver. After a running battle lasting two and a half hours they took the Dutchman. The *Nieuwstadt* had just started trading and had only 17 slaves aboard. Misson ordered the slaves to be clothed out of the Dutch mariners' sea chests and told the crew "that no man had power over the liberty of another, and while some who professed a more enlightened knowledge of the Deity sold men like beasts, they proved that their religion was no more than a grimace". For his part "he had not exempted his neck from the galling yoke of slavery and asserted his own liberty, to enslave others".

The slaves were taken one to each mess by the French so that they might sooner learn their language and the day-to-day work of the ship.

After the Atlantic crossing the *Victoire* was in a bad state: "Their ship growing very foul and going heavily through the water, they ran into the river of Lagos, where they hove her down, taking out such planks as had suffered most by the worms, and substituting new in their room". Then they careened the prize and headed south.

Misson at one point had to assemble the entire

crew for a lecture on swearing and drunkenness. The Dutch prisoners were passing bad habits onto the French crew and the effect on morale was becoming obvious. Off the coast of Angola they took another Dutchman loaded with cloth. This gave work to the *Victoire*'s tailors "for the whole crew began to be out at elbows".

By now Misson had 90 prisoners which he put on the *Nieuwstadt* with enough supplies to reach a Dutch settlement along the coast. Eleven of the Dutchmen chose to stay with Misson.

Just north of Table Bay the *Victoire* was engaged by an English man-o'-war of the same size (40 guns). Misson's crew boarded and took her. Nearly all the English seamen, but not the officers, came over to Misson. Caraccioli was put in charge of the new prize, renamed the *Bijoux*, and the crew elected their officers.

Both ships then made for the island of Johanna, north of Madagascar. The island was a common stopping place for ships on the Indian routes because of its ample supplies of fresh water, friendly natives and abundance of antiscorbutic fruits.

The pirates became friendly with the islanders and assisted in the defence of the island against an invasion attempt by nearby Mohilian Islanders. During their extended stay many of the pirates, including Misson and Caraccioli, took Johannan wives.

Using Johanna as a base they cruised the area

looking for a prize. They found a Portuguese ship — over half as big again as the *Victoire* — and fought a long and bloody engagement before she was taken. On board she had a quarter of a million pounds worth of gold dust, but the human price was high with 30 dead and 27 wounded — including Caraccioli who had to have his right leg amputated.

Libertatia

While Caraccioli recovered from his wounds on Johanna, Misson took the *Victoire* on a cruise. "He stretched over to Madagascar and coasted along this island to the northward, as far as the most northerly point, when turning back he encountered a bay to the northward of Diego Suares. He ran 10 leagues up this bay, and on the larboard side found it afforded a large and safe harbour with plenty of fresh water. He came here to an anchor, went ashore and examined the nature of the soil, which he found rich, the air wholesome and the country level. He told his men that this was an excellent place for an asylum, and that he determined here to fortify and raise a small town, and make docks for shipping, that they might have some place to call their own, and a receptacle when age or wounds had rendered them incapable of hardship, where they might enjoy the fruits of their labour, and go to their graves in peace."

Back once more on Johanna, Misson put his plan

to the two ships' crews and won their agreement. In return for a promise to come to Johanna's aid should it be attacked, the Queen of the island offered 300 men to help in the building of the new settlement. The only condition was that the men must be returned to Johanna after four months.

The pirates called their new home Libertatia and renouncing the titles of English, French, Dutch or African they called themselves Liberi. Their first work of construction was to raise two forts, one on each side of the harbour. These they equipped with 40 guns taken from the Portuguese prize. Then they set about building houses and storerooms.

A group travelled up country making friends and exchanging gifts with the local natives. With the work well in hand Misson took the *Victoire* to the coast of Zanzibar and fell upon another Portuguese carrying gold. The *Victoire* was outgunned and outmanned and, feeling he had bitten off more than he could chew, Misson made off. However the Portuguese gave chase and attacked the *Victoire*. The running battle lasted four hours but the crew of the *Victoire* finally succeeded in boarding and taking their prize. They locked the Portuguese seamen between decks and, with a skeleton crew on board, the prize followed the *Victoire* back to Libertatia.

Within sight of Madagascar they came upon a sloop which stood for them and flew a black flag with a white emblem depicting an arm brandishing a scimitar. It was the pirate Thomas Tew. After some

discussion Tew and his men decided to accompany the *Victoire* to Libertatia.

Such a colony was no new idea to these pirates. Tew had lost his quartermaster and 23 crewmen who had left to form a community of their own further up the Madagascar coast.

When the flotilla arrived at Libertatia Tew fired off a nine gun salute and the first fort answered with an equal number. Their arrival presented Libertatia with a new problem. They now had 190 Portuguese prisoners and only a population of 200 in their own community, excluding the Johanna Islanders. About 70 of the Portuguese came over to the Libertatians after a speech made by Caraccioli (whom Johnson describes as "having the art of persuasion"). The rest of the prisoners were set to work on a new dock about half a mile above the mouth of the harbour. They were kept in that area and Libertatia was made out of bounds to them in case they discovered their own strength and rebelled. The *Bijoux* lay as a guard-ship between the two communities.

Meanwhile the pirates became farmers sowing maize and wheat and other seeds found on board their prizes. The fields were held in common and "no hedge bounded any particular man's property".

It was time to return the Johannan men home but this presented another problem. To send a ship out undermanned was to risk losing it. To deplete the number of Libertatians by fully manning a ship was to risk the prisoners taking over the town. Misson

proposed giving the last prize to the Portuguese prisoners and setting them free. Tew and Caraccioli opposed this on the grounds that their base would soon known to all and attacked in force. A meeting was called and Misson's proposal was agreed to — the only alternative being the wholesale slaughter of the prisoners.

Misson addressed the prisoners and told them that he knew the consequences of giving them liberty and that he expected to be attacked as soon as the place of his retreat was known. However, he said he "did not make war with the oppressed but with the oppressors". He enquired into the circumstances of each of the prisoners and made good where ever it was possible. In return he required an oath from each that he should never serve against Libertatia.

The ship, with its guns removed, was provisioned for a voyage to the coast of Zanzibar. Shortly afterwards the town was visited by about 50 local tribesmen wishing to trade cattle and slaves. Deals were made and the slaves, being handed over, "were immediately clothed and put under the care of as many whites, who, by all possible demonstrations, endeavoured to make them understand that they were enemies to slavery".

It took the *Bijoux* three round trips to return the Johanna, men home. Those of Misson's company who had previously decided to settle on Johanna came back on *Bijoux*, along with their wives and children. Upon their return Misson and Caraccioli

pressed on with the work on the docks while Tew cruised the *Bijoux* on the Guinea Coast.

Just north of the Cape of Good Hope, Tew's crew took a Dutch East Indies galley and found on board a large quantity of English crown pieces. There were "taken for the common treasury; money being of no use where everything was in common". Off the coast of Angola they took and English slaver with 240 men, women and children below decks. The *Bijoux*'s African crewmen, who had also been taken on that coast, discovered many relatives and friends on board the slaver. Giving Tew assurance of good conduct the African crewmen struck off the fetters and handcuffs of the slaves and regaled them with the glories of their new life.

Upon their return to Libertatia and the completion of the new dock they began the construction of two sloops to be named the *Childhood* and *Liberty*. They were to be of 80 tons and armed with eight guns each. Their object was to embark upon an expedition to chart the "coasts, sands and shoals and depths of the Island of Madagascar" as well as to provide training ships for the released slaves.

Attempts to teach the Africans functional French eventually produced a useful kind of Esperanto as the Africans started to use a language made up of their own words, French, English, Dutch, Portuguese and words picked up from the six native Madagascar families who had now moved into the community.

The two sloops, with elected officers and equally mixed black and white crews, took off on their survey of the island. The survey took four months to complete and the schoolmaster produced detailed charts of the coast.

With many of the African ex-slaves now familiar with the basics of seamanship, Misson and Tew, with two ships, went cruising on the Arabian coast. Here they soon met a ship of the Great Mogul; an enormous vessel with 110 guns and 1500 sailors and pilgrims on board. She was bound for Jeddah with pilgrims for Mecca. Despite her size she put up a poor defence, the sailors being hampered by the volume of humanity and baggage on board. The two pirates drew alongside and made to board her. The defenders fired one round of small arms fire and fled below.

It was decided to keep the ship and sail it back to Libertatia. The guns would be useful and it could be more carefully searched for treasure that the Indians often hid in the deck ceilings and ballast. The passengers and crew were to be put ashore between Ain and Aden, within walking distance of civilisation. An incident which occurred during the landing of the passengers marks, in retrospection, the beginning of Misson's loss of influence in Libertatia's development as a libertarian community. The pirate crew brought back with them 100 girl passengers between the ages of 12 and 18 years. they intended taking them back to Libertatia as 'wives' for the

unmarried men. Misson strongly objected to this and called a meeting of the ships' companies. He found himself in a minority of one.

The Indian ship proved a heavy sailor and was nearly lost in a storm on the way to Madagascar. Once in Libertatia this lumbering monster of a ship was broken up carefully keeping all her "cordage and knee timber, bolts, eyes, chains and other iron work". The 110 guns were mounted in two batteries at either side of the harbour mouth.

By this time the colonists had a good parcel of land under cultivation as well as a herd of some 300 cattle bought from the local traders. The dock was also finished and its first ship was the *Victoire*. She was getting old and leaky and unfit for a long voyage. She was pulled to pieces and rebuilt keeping the same name. When the rebuilt *Victoire* was about to leave to cruise the Guinea coast, one of the sloops, with a highly agitated crew of African trainee seamen, entered the bay. She had been on a training cruise when she came across five tall ships on a direct course for Libertatia. They were Portuguese by their build, with 50 guns apiece and brimming over with armed men.

The inevitable attack was upon them and the whole colony stood to battle stations. The five ships made directly for the harbour and ran up their Portuguese colours. The two forts were not as effective as had been hoped. Their cannon fire managed to produce a heavy list in one of the ships but the

remaining four sailed on unscathed. Once inside the harbour, they thought their task was nearly done and they prepared to lower boats full of armed men. At this point they met a 'salute' from the two forts, the shore batteries and the two sloops as well as broadsides from the *Victoire* and *Bijoux*. This cannonade sent two of the Portuguese ships straight to the bottom. Luckily for the Portuguese they had contrived to enter just before the turn of the tide and "made more haste out then they did to get in".

The *Bijoux* and the *Victoire* gave chase. The listing ship dragged behind and once she was overtaken by the *Bijoux* and the *Victoire* her two companions left her to her fate. The crew put up a fierce defence but eventually called for quarter, which was duly granted.

Unhappily, amongst the Portuguese prisoners taken were two men who had previously been released by Misson on oath that they would never serve against him. The two were given a public trial for "perjury and ingratitude". Misson and Caraccioli called for corporal punishment but Tew held out strongly for a public hanging. Tew held that for such a crime an exemplary punishment was necessary. Eventually he won over Caraccioli then addressed the assembled Libertatians. He acknowledged Misson's tenderness towards malefactors but nevertheless felt that "no rule could be laid down which did not allow exceptions". By the end of his speech the

crowd roared that "hanging was too good for them". They were hung from the two points of the forts.

With the dream starting to fall apart in his hands, Misson found himself challenged to personal combat with Tew to settle a quarrel between their respective crews. Caraccioli stopped this foolishness and suggested that, to avoid it happening again in the future, they should set up a formal government which would enact "wholesome laws".

The next day the entire community was assembled to be addressed on the subject of an organised government. Johnson describes Caraccioli as having a "persuasive and insinuating way of argument". They agreed to the election of a Lord Conservator and government and also to the sharing out equally of the common treasure and the common cattle herd. Land could now be enclosed and deemed the private property of he that enclosed it.

A wooden Session House was built and the first session lasted 10 days and passed many laws. Misson was appointed Lord Conservator with the title of Supreme Excellence. Tew was appointed Admiral of the Fleet; Caraccioli Secretary of State. The treasure and cattle were divided and the land enclosed. Those who enclosed more land than they could work themselves were now able, and entitled by law, to hire the assistance of other Libertatians. Within a month of the Portuguese attack Libertatia had instituted capital punishment, money, private property and wage labour.

The colony was still in need of new recruits to maintain an agricultural land base as well as run a viable fleet. The community founded up the coast by Tew's quartermaster and some 20 of his crew was still functioning and Tew resolved to visit them and invite them to join the colony of Libertatia. However, the council was against this blanket invitation and, forgetting its own origins in its new-found respectability, declared that those who followed the old quartermaster were "of mutinous temper, and might infect others with a spirit of disorder". Tew was instructed to accept only those who made a serious application to join Libertatia and for whom Tew could give his personal "parole of honour for their quiet behaviour".

Tew left in the *Victoire* and later came to anchor off the settlement of his ex-crew members. He flew an ensign and fired a salute but got no response. He landed in a small boat and was met by two men who conducted him to their settlement in the woods. Tew invited them to rejoin him in Libertatia and outlined the advantages it would bring. The quartermaster agreed that it would certainly bring advantages to Libertatia. But he could see little advantage to himself and his companions when here they "enjoyed all the necessaries of life, were free and independent of all the world" and added "it would be madness again to subject ourselves to any government which, however mild, still exerted some power".

The only government this settlement had was a

Governor who held office for three months and was chosen by lot. The power of the Governor "extended no further than to the judging of matters of small difference which might arise". The lottery was open to every member of the settlement who had not held office before "by which agreement everyone would be raised in time to the supreme command". The settlers found that lot was preferable to election as it "prevented all canvassing and making interest for votes... left no openings for making divisions and parties, and was a means to continue that repose inseparable from a unity among themselves".

But the settlers were fully aware of their position in relation to the outside world. Not being an 'official' colony they were unable to engage in legitimate trading because of the laws relating to aiding pirates. Furthermore, as pirates, they could be attacked with impunity by any passing warship or adventurer. To this end the quartermaster said that they were open to representations from Englishmen in America or Europe to fix a colony here and "wipe away the odious appellation of pirates". But while they were open to representations they were not hopeful. The quartermaster added, "But 'tis ridiculous to think we will become subjects to greater rogues than ourselves" Tew went back to the *Victoire* and returned the next day with rum and brandy. While Tew and the settlers shared a bowl of punch a sudden storm arose. Tew signalled from ashore that he wished to be taken back on board, but the sea

was running too high for a boat to be put down. The storm increased and Tew and the settlers watched from the shore as the *Victoire* tried to ride it out. After two hours of struggling, she "parted her cables, was drove ashore where it was steep to, and perished with all her men".

Tew had no choice but to accept his old comrades' hospitality. After three months they saw a large ship which Tew believed was the *Bijoux*, but she ignored their signal fires. A month later, coming early to the beach, Tew found two sloops at anchor a short distance from the shore. They were the *Childhood* and *Liberty*. Misson put down a boat and came ashore. Tew's joy soon disappeared when he heard Misson's news. In the dead of night, without the least provocation, two large groups of natives had attacked Libertatia. With the *Victoire* and *Bijoux* out cruising, the number of colonists was greatly reduced. Caraccioli and what men he could assemble tried to make a stand but they were cut to pieces. The natives then went through the town slaughtering men, women and children alike. The 46 survivors grabbed what loot they could and piled aboard the two sloops.

Tew suggested that they go to America where Misson was unknown and could live in peace and comfort. The quartermaster added that, while in America, he could try to procure a commission to settle a colony. But Misson was disillusioned after the failure of Libertatia and resolved to return to Europe, secretly visit his family and retire from the

world. The salvaged treasure and the survivors were divided between the two sloops; the majority going with Tew. They waited a week in the hope that the *Bijoux* would return. They then set sail for the Guinea coast hoping to meet her there. En route the two ships were overtaken by a storm and Tew and his crew watched, unable to help, as Misson's sloop went down. There were no survivors.

Tew put in to a trading post run by an ex-pirate, Adam Baldridge, on the island of St Mary's, just off the Madagascar coast. Protected by Baldridge's fort he careened the sloop (which Baldridge listed as the *Amity* — Tew's original sloop) and fitted her for an Atlantic crossing. According to Baldridge's journal he left St Mary's in December 1693. He arrived at Rhode Island in April 1694.

Tew lived quietly at home for many years, but was constantly pestered by his former crewmen to make just one more trip. Eventually he gave in and bought a small sloop. Attacking a ship of the Great Mogul in the Red Sea he was disembowelled by a cannonball and died soon afterwards.

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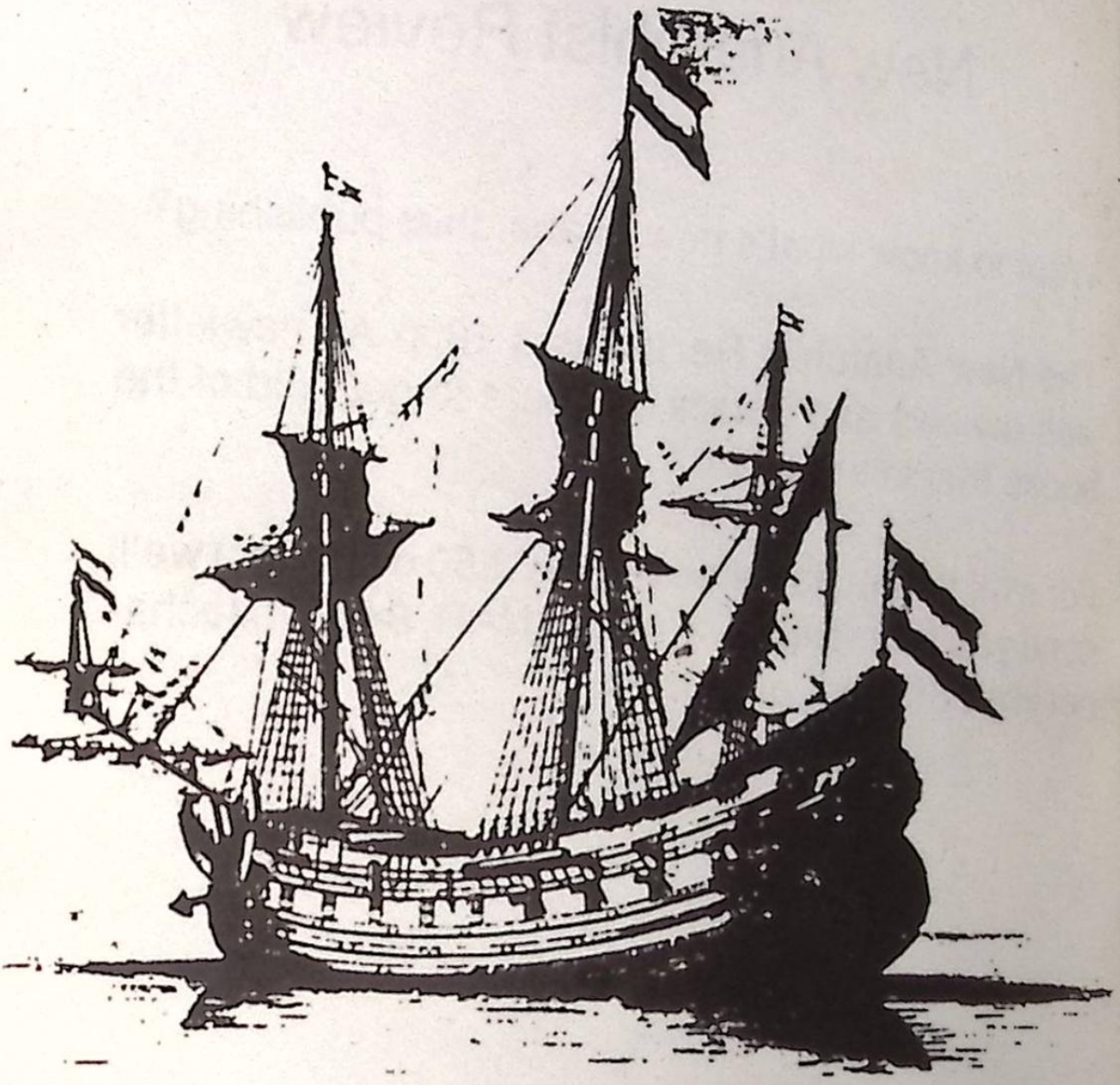

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